DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 214 FL 016 198

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TITLE Title VII Projects of Academic Excellence: Efforts to Promote Parent Involvement and Literacy.
PUB DATE Jun 86
NOTE 11p.; In: Simich-Dudgeon, Carmen, Ed. Issues of Parent Involvement and Literacy. Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Trinity College (Washington, DC, June 6-7 1986), see FL 016 190.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Education; *Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; Hispanic Americans; *Immigrants; *Limited English Speaking; Literacy Education; *Parent Participation; School Community Relationship; Tutors; Universities; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Elementary Secondary Education Act Title VII

ABSTRACT

Descriptions of four Title VII Academic Excellence projects focus on their efforts to promote limited-English-proficient (LEP) parents' involvement in schools and literacy. "Parents as Tutors" (Monica Sandoval) outlines the structure of the Brownsville (Texas) Independent School District's program to involve parents of children in kindergarten through third grade while improving students' self- concept and academic achievement. "Project Welcome" (Joan Davis) describes the offerings of the Glendale (California) Unified School District's program in three elementary schools, including English as a second language, health and nutrition instruction, and immigrant self- esteem and parenting classes. "Parents Assisting in Learning (PAL)" (Delia Garcia) presents the aims, content, and strategies of a Florida International University program implemented in the Broward County Public Schools, designed to promote greater Hispanic parent involvement in the educational process. "Development of Parental Involvement in Bilingual Vocational Education" (Starr Betses) briefly describes the Greater Lowell (Massachusetts) Regional Technical High School program to provide LEP parents with information about the educational system, and outlines some quantifiable program results. Two specialists' responses to the presentations are also summarized. (MSE)

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TITLE VII PROJECTS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LITERACY

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PARENTS AS TUTORS

Title VII Project
Implemented in Brownsville, Texas

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The Parents as Tutors (PAT) project is an Academic Excellence Project funded by Title VII to serve 150 parents of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students at 13 campuses from Kindergarten through the second grade in the Brownsville Independent School District.

This project is a follow-up of a formerly funded Title VII project that served pre-kindergarten LEP students and their parents through an instructional television program. This pre-K ITV Program was approved as an exemplary program by the State of Texas Demonstration Programs for School Improvement (DPSI) network. The program is now carried out with local money in all 23 elementary campuses.

The PAT project started in the 1984-85 school year with Kindergarten parents at 13 campuses. The project has three major goals: 1) increased parental involvement; 2) increased self-concept, and 3) increased academic achievement on the part of the students. The overall objectives the first year were to provide training to parents in six cluster sites. This training was geared to build the knowledge base of the parents in the following areas:

- o Parental involvement
- o Child growth and development
- o Motivation
- o Self-concept
- o Language development
- o Curriculum in state Transitional Bilingual Education Programs
- o Home learning centers

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In addition, the training focused on the development of the parents' tutoring skills.

The tutoring began slowly with generic activities that all parents conducted in their homes and reported on at regular meetings at their cluster sites. By April of the first year we gave parents activities that were directly related to their children's skill level and proficiency level in English and Spanish. The activities focused specifically on language arts and math.

In the second year, when the students are in the first grade, meetings are held every two weeks with parents at the cluster sites. Child care and transportation are provided for parents, based on need. Sessions are alternated to give parents information on topics they chose as most closely related to their

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needs and interests. During topic informational sessions, commercially developed activities are made available to the parents.

In the alternating sessions, parents are involved in developing activities created by staff to focus on language arts and math that are correlated to the district curriculum and the state essential elements. Parents are involved in cutting, coloring, pasting and laminating the activities that they are going to use in tutoring the child. They are encouraged to provide a range of experiences to their children. Activities must be more than pencil and paper, for example, visits to the library, reading to the child and field trips. Discussions about particular problems and/or successes are also discussed in small groups with parents.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the activities used by each parent, contracts are completed by the parent indicating the amount of time each activity took, how often it was used, whether the child liked it and whether the activity seemed appropriate for the child's skill level. In addition, a Log of Tutoring activities is kept by each parent.

Approximately 80% of the parents served are completely and/or dominantly Spanish-speaking. Around 80% were educated in Mexico with most completing only up to the 6th grade. Of those, the majority have been living in the U.S. from 2 to 15 years. Some were born and educated in Brownsville. Many of the parents participating in the PAT project are now attending adult ESL classes provided by the district's Adult Education Department and some have received their GED since becoming involved in the project.

In the third year, the project will continue to provide parent training to increase each parent's knowledge base and refine tutoring skills in the areas of language arts and math. We will also begin development of a parent training manual and a replication guide. Staff will begin to work with the administrators and teachers to train them to carry on the project at their schools after Title VII funding is no longer available.

PROJECT WELCOME
Title VII Family English Literacy Program
Implemented in Glendale, California

Joan Davis
Glendale Unified School District

Project welcome is a Title VII-funded education program serving the needs of parents of limited-English-Proficient (LEP) students enrolled in three elementary schools in the Glendale Unified School District.

Glendale, is a community of 144,000 inhabitants located immediately north of downtown Los Angeles and extending to the foothills of the San Gabriel mountains. The District operates three senior high schools, four junior high schools and nineteen elementary schools with a total enrollment of 20,000 students.

Since 1980, the district has experienced a dramatic increase in its student population from Armenian, Korean and Spanish primary language backgrounds. In 1980, 18.4% of the total enrollment in the district was LEP. This percentage increased to 24.6% in 1981 and was 30.8% at the start of the 1985/86 school year.

Project Welcome is serving the needs of Armenian, Korean and Spanish speaking parents at Cerritos, Jefferson and Mann elementary schools. The curriculum consists of English as a Second Language-Literacy, Health and Nutrition, and Self-Esteem-Parenting.

The project was launched with an intensive recruiting effort in October 1985. Recruitment consisted of on-site briefings of teachers at staff meetings, presentations to PTA and other parent groups, as well as classroom visitations to distribute a take-home informational piece. Follow-up phone calls were made to schedule testing and classes were formed and scheduled to occur at times most convenient for the parents.

Morning classes were offered at two sites on a two session per week basis. Evening classes were conducted at all three sites, also on a twice per week basis. It was discovered that morning classes were preferred by homemakers with small children while fathers were generally available to attend evening classes.

It became quickly apparent that on-site babysitting services were necessary to assure the success of the morning classes. This has led to an unforeseen benefit to the project in that pre-school children of the three language backgrounds have had an opportunity to play together, learn English songs and games, and have a mini pre-school experience.

The parent English classes are taught by a trained ESL teacher and aide. Parents are learning English using a low anxiety, natural approach, Total Physical Response, a technique which utilizes the whole body to learn language. Other techniques are songs and chants; use of lots of pictures and props, pair tutoring in which students work together, as well as the more traditional approaches to language teaching and learning.

The second component of *Project Welcome*, Health and Nutrition, was launched in January 1986. The nutrition curriculum was developed with the cooperation of the California Dairy Council, the Carnation Company, and the University of California, Cooperative Extension. Prospective participants were recruited

through outdoor coffee klatches in front of the schools as parents waited to pick up students, through telephone calls to parents who expressed interest in ESL classes, and through informational flyers sent home with the students.

Armenian, Korean, and Spanish speaking teachers with health or nutrition backgrounds conducted the classes which focused on proper nutrition, food preparation demonstrations, recipes, and shopping hints.

Classes were scheduled in the morning or evening according to the availability of teachers and the preferences of the students. For morning classes availability of baby sitting was, once again, of tantamount importance. The six-week nutrition classes were held on all three campuses.

The four-week health unit utilized the Mary Poppins approach, "A spoonful of sugar to make the medicine go down." With the assistance of students and instructors from the Glendale High School Cosmetology Department "hands on" demonstrations were interspersed with didactic presentations.

The first session included skin and nail care. Parents were given facials, make-up, and manicures by the high school students. The school nurse conducted the second session, a film and discussion about the prevention and control of head lice. The cosmetology students returned for the third session which included haircuts and new hairdos for everyone. The last health session featured dental hygiene presented by the district head nurse.

The third component of the project for 1985/86 was directed toward improving self-esteem with special emphasis on the concerns of immigrant parents.

Through the cooperation of the Korean Youth center sessions were presented in Korean. Foothill Family Services and Verdugo Mental Health Center presented sessions in Spanish. Topics included: how to have more effective discipline in the home; ways to improve communication between parents, children and school; how to resolve home-school conflicts; comparisons between American and native cultures, and finally, resources available in the community to treat more serious problems.

The original proposal for *Project Welcome* incorporated classes which parents had asked for, and close consultation with parents continues by way of regularly scheduled Parent Advisory Council meetings. Areas of interest to be explored in the coming year have been identified.

A special literacy program is planned for the summer of 1986, which will utilize the tutoring talents of parent participants who attended a special weekend workshop in January. There they learned how to effectively teach reading and writing to other parents who have not had the opportunity to attend school in their native country.

Parent tutors who attended the January workshop were invited to participate in a special Saturday workshop in May where they were shown how to increase their leadership skills and work more closely with the school.

During its first year *Project Welcome* has succeeded in accomplishing its major goal as set forth in the original proposal: "Project Welcome is designed to extend a comforting hand of friendship to parents of limited-English-proficient students who are newcomers to our country, our culture, our language, and our school system."

PARENTS ASSISTING IN LEARNING (PAL)
Title VII Program
Implemented in Broward County, Florida

Delia Garcia
Florida International University

Parents have finally been rediscovered. This rediscovery during the last decade, has resulted in the recognition that parents are a potent force in the lives of their children. Educators are now more interested than ever in devising ways to involve parents in their programs and in defining the nature, kind and extent of the relationships that should exist between parents and schools.

However, even with this renewed interest, the language-minority parent population is a group which is frequently ignored and consequently does not play as significant a role in the educational process. These parents of students who are a majority in certain localities of our country, should be encouraged to participate in schools by teachers and administrators. In an era where the link between home and school has been identified as a significant determinant in a child's social and academic achievement, the need to include and actively involve all parents, regardless of race, culture or language spoken becomes of eminent importance.

There are critical questions confronting us. How can we begin to include the language-minority parent as an equal partner in the educational process? Are we effectively utilizing the skills and contributions these parents can make? How can we facilitate the involvement of these parents in our children's schools? Have we truly examined our parental involvement programs, to see that they meet the special needs of language-minority parents? To address these issues represents the beginning of a renewed and effective partnership between the home, school and community.

The *Parents Assisting in Learning Program (PAL)* is a Title VII training project designed to create and promote greater Hispanic parental involvement in the educational process of our children.

The PAL Program evolved from the Parents can be Tutors and CAPI programs, two previous model projects in the area of parent training. The project is currently implemented in Broward County, Florida. It represents a cooperative effort between Florida International University and the School Board of Broward County.

The programmatic objectives of the program aim at:

- Increasing parents' knowledge of the educational system in the U.S., and how this relates to a largely foreign bureaucratic system.
- Assisting parents in becoming actively involved in factors which affect their children's education. This is a process of attitude change in role perception, and encouragement to take an active role in the activities of the school.

- Providing parents with concrete methods and bilingual materials which they may use at home with their children.

- Training parents in home-based academic tutoring of their children in the three areas of basic skills covered in the State Assessment Test (Mathematics, Reading, and Writing).

- Expanding knowledge of parenting skills and patterns of family interaction.

The major thrust of the program is to involve Hispanic parents whose children who have demonstrated difficulty in Florida's State Assessment Test, or who are classified as limited-English-proficient (LEP), in specific activities designed to improve the student's academic achievement and English language proficiency. Program objectives are accomplished through the implementation of cycles of Parent-Child Training Sessions and Follow-Up Activities. The training emphasizes the importance of the interaction between parent and child as a means of enhancing the ability of students to acquire greater academic skills and English language proficiency.

The Parent-Child Training Sessions are offered at selected Broward County Public School during the evenings. The following topics are addressed:

- The importance of parental involvement in schools

- American educational philosophy

- Parenting skills

- Tutoring skills in Math, Reading, and Writing

- Importance of state and national tests such as the Florida State Assessment Test

- Human interaction

The training needs of parents and children are addressed in a series of ten bilingual (Spanish-English) manuals developed by project staff. These are distributed free of charge to the parents. The manuals provide parents with specific activities and skills required to facilitate home-based tutoring to their children.

The ultimate success of the project is determined by the number of students in the program who are promoted to the next grade level, and where applicable, they are able to master all objectives of the State Assesment Test. Parental participation is measured through attendance at parent-teacher conferences, PTA/PTO meetings, number of hours spent tutoring, involvement in Parent Advisory Committees, and other related school activities. In addition, parents are pre- and post-tested on specific pre-determined criteria of material covered in the training cycle.

Through the PAL program certain strategies for promoting parental involvement have developed which we believe are an important component of the program.

1. Contrary to the belief of many school administrators, the Hispanic community is very concerned with the educational experiences of their children. Hispanic parents have been a largely untapped resource in education. It has been shown that they are receptive to participation pleas when approached in a warm, personal, positive, and supportive way. Parental reception appraches should deal with the feeling of fear, frustration, and alienation regarding the American educational system. Parents must feel welcome and comfortable at their children's school.

2. Parents must believe that what they are doing is meaningful and will contribute to their child's social and intellectual development.

3. Parents are more likely to participate to the fullest extent if they receive practical information and learn skills which are readily applicable at home. What we see happening is that most parent involvement programs lack the specificity of purpose required to maintain ego-involvement. As a result, participant turnover and dropout rates are high. When parental involvement is directly related to the child's developmental welfare, the turnover and dropout rates will be attenuated. Identifying student achievement and the quality of the parent-child relationship as central concerns of a parent involvement program, serves to maintain motivation and interest.

4. If participants are Spanish-dominant, and most do not have command of the English language, parent training seesions should be conducted in Spanish. Unnecessary translation is distracting and often disturbing to participants and parent coordinators.

5. While training sessions are taking place, it is suggested that the school provide tutorial and child-care services for elementary school children who accompany parents.

6. The parenting skills component should be given careful attention in a training program for Hispanic parents. Parenting in the context of a foreign culture is a particularly difficult task. The cultural gap which exists between foreign-born parents and American-born children transcends generational gaps.

7. The use of novel techniques which enhance interest in the program is necessary.

8. There is a need to send out weekly written notices to the parents reminding them of the specific involvement required (training sessions in this case). In addition, weekly telephone calls are the most effective means of communication for it serves to establish linkages and rapport.

DEVELOPMENT OF PARENTAL INVOVEMENT IN BILINGUAL VOVCATIONAL EDUCATION

Starr Betses

Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School
Tyngsboro, Massachusetts

Our highly successful parent training model is a Demonstration Grant in its third and last year of implementation at the Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical High School (GLRVTS) in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts. This project proposes a model for attaining meaningful parental involvement for the benefit of both parents and students. The majority of participants are Hispanic LEP parents and their sons or daughters.

Three years ago our bilingual progam itself was in place; staff, texts and equipment were commendable. However, one factor which has a great influence on the students' performance was weak. Our missing link was the parents. They were pleased with our program and as a result they were passive and uninvolved. We wanted them to work with us to the benefit of the children and the school and the parents themselves.

Our premise was that parents have basic needs that must be met before they can effectively and confidently contribute to the Anglo middle class format that most schools require of their Parent Advisory Councils (PAC). In non-threatening group building activities, we addressed the parents' basic needs for an understanding of the educational, social and political systems in the United States. We also motivated parents by instructing them in career awareness to meet the pressing needs of their own lives.

A needs assessment showed that the parents had to be encouraged to realize that, regardless of their level of education or knowledge of English, they could make meaningful contributions to their children's seducation. Parental involvement started on a one-to-one and small group basis. Meetings were unhurried and personal. Time and flexibility were essential considerations since each cluster of parents had varying needs. The parent trainer met her objectives systematically, structure came into place and parent leaders evolved.

Evaluations here conducted to determine the progress made by the parents based on data obtained from records kept by the project staff, observations, interviews and anonymous questionnaires concerning training and PAC meetings. We also used a pre-post test to assess the impact of the training sessions. Findings proved that we had achieved much more than we had aspired to.

I. Parents demonstrated significant improvement in all skills on the training list according to a pre-post measurement instrument. The greatest gains were in their ability to:

- o state the purpose of the school
- o summarize the role of the PAC
- o list school regulations
- o explain and follow a complicated admissions process
- o describe the structure of school administration
- o explain the role of the school committee
- o describe special education services
- o summarize the rights and requirements of the Bilingual Law
- o describe strategies for addressing teenage problems

- o explain how to motivate students and keep them in school
- o explain the benefits of vocational education

II. Parents' responses to an anonymous questionnaire were highly favorable. Among the comments were the following:

- o Meetings were held frequently enough and the they were well-organized and helpful. At least 30% of the parents attended each meeting.
- o They had been given the opportunity to make recommendations to the bilingual program and they praised it.
- o A large number of parents wanted to continue with the program even though their children would be graduating.
- o Mothers arranged a thank-you luncheon and, on behalf of the PAC, presented plaques to teachers at the graduation Bilingual Award ceremony.

III. Parents initiated contact with the school and significant strides were made.

- o During the first project year, phone logs showed a 700% increase in calls by the parents to the school for school related purposes. Year II indicated a 200% increase over Year I.
- o There was a remarkable decrease in student absences. the mean number of absence in 1984-1985 was 6.44 as compared to 18.28 in 1983-1984. The average decrease was 62%.
- o The drop-out rate decreased markedly. During the 1984-1985 academic year, the drop-out rate for Hispanics at GLRVIS was under 6 percent. Consequently, a greater number of Hispanic students at the GLRVTS graduated. Other high schools which serve students from the same neighborhoods had an estimated drop-out rate of 60% for Hispanic students.
- o Parents thoroughly understood the admissions process and completed it without assistance which led to increased enrollment in the bilingual program.
- o Parents incorporated to form a non-profit organization called PUEDA.
- o Parents attended local, state and national bilingual conferences, including NABE '86 in Chicago, to share their successes and expand their understanding of Bilingual Education.

As the Title VII Parental Involvement Demonstration Project comes to and end, the Hispanic parents of our students are actively and enthusiastically participating in the PAC and favorably impacting their children's education. While this year's data has not been analyzed, we have observed that about 50% of the seniors are planning to continue their education at the community college or university level.

Looking towards the near future, our concerns are two-fold. First, we aspire to maintain the superior levels of motivation and involvement of our Hispanic parents. Second, we are contemplating the development of a similarly meaningful program for the Southeast Asian parents whose children are beginning to enroll in our school. We expect their needs to be different and we plan to address them in the same vigorous ways of our first program.

* * *

TITLE VII Projects

Discussants: Dr. Aurora Martinez Quevedo, Office of Desegregation, San Jose, California

Mr. Ricardo Martinez, Legislative Analyst, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Martinez Quevedo addressed her comments to the similarities and some differences between what was being discussed in the papers regarding Title VII projects and a highly sucessful program, which is a cooperative agreement between the Mexican government's Ministry of Education and the state of California. This project is based on learning groups made up of parents who themselves help with a facilitator to facilitate literacy skills for each other. The goal is to get adults where they are certified both in Mexico and California as graduates of an elementary, junior high or high school program.

She commented on the themes of illiteracy, self-esteem, nutrition, and ESL which are similar in other programs. So is the development of needs assessment by local communities.

Martinez Quevedo commented on the need to continue to implement programs such as those described in this session. The ultimate objective of such a program is to get them to a point where they are truly being run by the local parents themselves.

Martinez commented on how far the Title VII projects have come in involving parents of LEP children. He encouraged the audience to continue to raise the issue that the problems of literacy for LEP children go beyond the needs of recently arrived immigrants and refugees. The language and literacy needs of native-born LEP children are also pressing and Title VII projects should continue to address that population also.

Martinez pointed out the discrepancy between the needs for more trained personnel to deal with the ever-increasing numbers of LEP kids, and the Secretary's office which says there are enough personnel and less LEP children. He encouraged the audience to maintain pressure on state departments of education about this issue.

He concluded his remarks with an encouragement to contact the Committee on Education and Labor for help or answers to questions.